

REMARKS

Claims 24, 26 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by either one of Christiansen et al. (U.S. 5,533,078) or Grattier (U.S. 5,180,545). Claims 28, 30, 37 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Christiansen et al. (U.S. 5,533,078). Claims 27, 32, 34 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Grattier (U.S. 5,180,545). Claims 31, 33 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Grattier.

Claims 24 and 36 have been amended.

Reconsideration of the application based on the following remarks is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejections

Claims 24, 26 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by either one of Christiansen et al. (U.S. 5,533,078) or Grattier (U.S. 5,180,545).

Claims 24 and 36 have been amended to clarify the convergence orientation of the noses. Support can be found in Figures 5 and 6, for example.

Withdrawal of the rejections of claims 24, 26 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by either one of Christiansen et al. (U.S. 5,533,078) or Grattier (U.S. 5,180,545) is respectfully requested.

Claims 28, 30, 37 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Christiansen et al. (U.S. 5,533,078).

Christiansen et al. discloses a “pressurized water reactor nuclear fuel assembly 10 comprising a lower tie plate 12, guide tubes 14, fuel rods 18, which are spaced radially and supported by spacer grids 16a, 16b, 16c, 16d, 16e, and 16f which are spaced along the guide tubes, instrumentation tube 28, and upper tie plate 37 attached to the upper ends of the guide tubes.” (Col. 2, lines 61 to 67).

Claims 24 and 36 have been amended to recite in part, “wherein the noses converge in a direction that is orientated towards the outer side of the end piece.”

Christiansen et al. fails to teach or show “wherein the noses converge in a direction that is orientated towards the outer side of the end piece,” as recited in claims 24 and 36. Figure 5 of Christiansen et al. does not show such a limitation, and in fact shows the vertical extensions of support housing 50 converging away from the same end piece and toward the fuel rods. (See Figure 6). This is the exact opposite of the present invention as now claimed.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 28, 30, 37 and 39 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

Claims 27, 32, 34 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Grattier (U.S. 5,180,545).

Grattier discloses a lower end nozzle of a fuel assembly having a particle retention device and fuel assembly having such an end nozzle. “This end nozzle comprises an adaptor plate 2, through which water-passage holes pass, and supporting feet 3, which come to rest on the lower core plate 4 of the reactor when the fuel assembly is in operation.” (Col. 3, lines 36 to 39).

In light of the discussion above regarding claims 24 and 36, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 27, 32, 34 and 35 is respectfully requested.

Claims 31, 33 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Grattier (U.S. 5,180,545).

Grattier is discussed above.

In light of the discussion above regarding claims 24 and 36, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 31, 33 and 40 is respectfully requested.

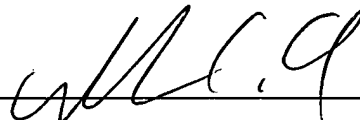
CONCLUSION

It is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and applicants respectfully request such action.

If any additional fees are deemed to be due at this time, the Assistant Commissioner is authorized to charge payment of the same to Deposit Account No. 50-0552.

Respectfully submitted,

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